



East Moriches School District

Reopening FAQ

Please find a list of questions and answers that have been raised about the District reopening plan. Please note, this FAQ will be updated frequently and adapted when Governor Cuomo announces the status of schools for Fall 2020.

Daily Instruction -

Q. Do parents have the option to keep their children home everyday for full remote learning?

A. Yes.

Q. What model is the East Moriches School District planning to use at the start of the school year?

A. Being that some students have already indicated that they will not be returning for in-person instruction, EMO will begin on a Hybrid model.

Q. Will attendance be taken for students on remote learning?

A. Yes.

Q. How will social distancing look in the classroom.

A. Students will be 6 feet apart from each other, as measured from the center of their seat to the center of the next seat in all directions.

Q. What will the hybrid model look like?

A. Students will attend their classes, whether they are remote or in person, according to their PowerSchool Schedule. Teachers will utilize screenshare technology to show students at home what is happening in the classroom And they will hear the voice of the teacher as they teach. Staff will be tasked with following up with students on remote learning to ensure they are comfortable with the material presented throughout the day.

Q. How many students fit in a classroom?

- A. Our largest class size is 21 students. Using social distancing guidelines, our classroom can hold up to 24/25 students depending on the building.

Q. If a parent decides to keep their children home at the start of the year to do remote learning, will the student be able to return to school at some point during the year once the parent feels comfortable sending them?

- A. Every effort will be made to maintain the cohorts that New York State has prescribed in their School Reopening Guidance. If state guidance changes as it relates to cohorts and social distancing, we may be able to allow a remote student back to school.

Q. Can you elaborate on the hybrid model? If a student participates in this model is it for the full year?

- A. EMO will start with a hybrid model, as we already have students that have indicated that they are not returning in person this year and student that have indicated that they will participate in person. If state guidance changes as it relates to cohorts and social distancing, we may be able to allow a remote student back to school.

Q. If for some reason the schools have to do distance learning, will special ed students get their services in person?

- A. The State Education department has tasked each district with fully implementing IEP's and 504's with the highest fidelity practicable. EMO will abide by that mandate and handle each case individually.

Q. If parents opt for distance learning, who is providing the instruction if the teacher is in school?

- A. Students on remote instruction will follow their PowerSchool schedule and attend their classes with their actual teacher "live" online. Attendance will be taken - even for those on remote instruction.

Q. How would social distancing take place in PE?

- A. Our Gyms will only hold two classes of children and there is more than enough room for proper social distancing. Appropriate activities will be used to avoid violating social distancing guidelines.

Q. How will students access materials that were typically shared (books, computers, etc.)?

- A. Sharing of personal objects will not be allowed and consumables will be utilized as often as possible. A discussion of a bring your own device (BYOD) has been discussed for classes that intend to use computers to support their lessons. Chromebooks that are used in class will be sanitized nightly by our custodial class. Class sets of books will also not be shared and will be sanitized as needed.

Q. Will SCOPE hours remain the same?

A. Yes

Q. Will the first few months be a recap of last year? Or will the students be expected to be ready to go in their new grade?

A. Teachers and administration are working on identifying any “gaps” in learning and will adjust the curriculum as needed to support students.

Q. Has a blended learning model been looked at? Where the kids are in school only say 2-3 days a week and then virtual the rest of the week.

A. This model was briefly considered. EMO is lucky enough to have the correct room size and class size to support in person, 5 day a week instruction using social distancing guidelines. Students being in front of their teachers is the best way for them to learn and will allow us to support their well being,

Q. Is the space between students a true 6 feet?

A. Yes. Measurements are made from the center of a student seat to the center of the student seats around them in all directions. Imagine a tape measure and every 6 feet is the center of a student seat.

Q. How will special areas be conducted (PE, music, art)?

A. In general, special area teachers (Art, Music, FACS, Tech, Library etc) will push into classes to conduct their lesson. These classes may also be conducted outside if the curriculum allows it. PE will occur in the Gyms and outside weather permitting. Students will not be expected to change for PE and should be prepared to go outside a lot!

Q. Will there be room for adults in the room to be socially distanced from the students?

A. Yes, a 6 foot area (or bigger) has been built into the plan for each room.

Q. Will students have access to their lockers?

A. No.

Q. Can a child remote learn while staying home during a quarantine if they have to be due to Covid?

A. Yes.

Q. It was mentioned at the BOE meeting last night that our classrooms could accommodate 20 students. As I understand it, our classrooms measure roughly 750 square feet. Giving each person a minimum of 36 square feet, that limits us to a maximum of 20 people (not just students) in a classroom. This would need to include Teachers, Aides, and the Specials and Services that push in.

A. What the math does not take into account is you will have students sitting around the perimeter sitting along the wall. If students are there they do not need to have spacing to the wall.

Q. Will families be provided with equipment for DL? A family that has multiple children could not follow the bell schedule unless they had equitable access to technology.

A. The most recent district survey via the parent portal has two questions regarding access to a device and wifi. Data from the survey will help the district equip each student with the technology tools needed to be successful during DL.

Student Well Being-

Q. Also, what would it look like in regards to a water break throughout the day?

A. Students will be encouraged to bring their own water bottles and will be allowed to fill it and use it throughout the day.

Q. How often will the children be able to get up and walk around during the day? What opportunities do they have for socialization?

A. This will be closely monitored and movement will be discouraged. However, recess and mask breaks will help with socialization.

Q. Will there be a kindergarten orientation? That includes being introduced to riding on the bus.

A. No final plan for this has been created yet. However, the possibility of videos and a virtual presentation is highly likely to accompany any in-person experience.

Q. What happens if a child refuses to wear the mask?

A. Without medical documentation, mask wearing is mandatory. Staff members will of course be sensitive to the needs of children and will handle each situation on a case by case basis.

Q. For those entering Kindergarten is there an opportunity to come tour the school in person.

A. We are working on creating an onsite visit for our incoming Kindergarten students.

Q. What will be the procedures for students who exhibit seasonal allergy symptoms? Will they be required to remain home in light of the current pandemic?

A. The school nurse will triage and treat all allergies, injuries, and illnesses as normal. If needed, our school district physician will be contacted for guidance.

Q. If a student has a sore throat/runny nose, etc. will they automatically be advised to stay home for 14 days? or will you expect a medical note? What if it is just the common cold? or strep throat?

A. If a student is sick in any way they should stay home. Students must be fever free for 24 hours and have a doctors note before they are allowed to return to school.

Q. Sick room: If a child has been exposed or has a temperature, will there be a designated sick room rather than the nurse's office?

A. Yes.

Q. If the students were able to distance further in a smaller class could the students have their masks off?

A. Current guidelines from New York State prohibit that. Masks plus distancing is the mandate for schools.

Q. Can students bring in their own unscented hand sanitizer?

A. Yes.

Masks -

Q. Are masks going to be required?

A. Yes - at all times.

Q. What will mask breaks look like?

A. Students will be able to remove their masks every 40 minutes. Students that have verified medical documentation that shows a requirement for more frequent mask removal will be handled on a case by case basis. Outside areas will also be available - weather permitting - for teachers to bring their students for a mask break.

Q. Will Staff be required to wear masks?

A. Yes, at all times.

Q. Can students wear shields instead of masks?

A. No. That would violate the State Guidelines for Reopening

Q. When students are on lunch and need to take off their mask, do you have a plan for that to keep them socially distanced?

A. Yes. Student personal responsibility as well as adult supervision will play a big role in ensuring that social distancing is maintained.

Q. Will teachers wear the clear masks?

A. The administration is not mandating a type of mask that needs to be worn. Teachers will decide for themselves what is appropriate for their safety as well as their practice.

Q. How will teachers handle a situation where a child is insistent that they need a break from the mask even if it is in the middle of the day or during instruction?

A. Teachers will use professional judgement and incorporate their training to deal with each case on an individual basis.

Cleaning / Air Filtration-

Q. Will you be able to adjust the temperature in the school to make it more comfortable?

A. Our typical HVAC systems will be utilized. These Univents cycle air through filters 24 hours a day. We do not have traditional air conditioning and will not be installing it prior to the school year. Teachers will be encouraged to promote airflow as much as possible during warm months. They will be able to use fans. Windows and doors will be utilized to promote airflow, but safety and security measures will need to be adhered to as well.

Q. What filters are being used to take germs out of the air?

A. We are using MERV-13 filters.

Q. Will a professional cleaning service be used?

A. No. All custodial staff have undergone training to meet and exceed the cleanliness standards outlined in the State Guidance.

Q. What cleaning products will be used to sanitize the building?

A. The district's regular hygiene, cleaning and disinfection procedures and products meet or exceed requirements from the CDC and the Department of Health.

EPA-approved cleaning and disinfection products used within the district are bactericidal, virucidal, and/or fungicidal including:

1. EnvirOx H₂Orange₂ Hyper-Concentrate 112, which is a hydrogen peroxide based cleaner utilized during school day
2. Virex 256 II, effective against microorganisms including MRSA, Influenza Type A2 with Human Coronavirus claims for use against SARS-CoV-2 is used after school hours

Q. Who will be doing the cleaning in between lunch sessions, as well as in the classroom?

A. Our custodial staff has been trained on sanitizing the building and they will be handling all cleaning of rooms, equipment, and multi touch surfaces.

Q. Will students be encouraged to wash their hands?

A. Handwashing will be built into periods 1,3,5,7,and 9.

Q. Disinfectant days: Some surrounding districts proposed one day a week (Wednesday) for disinfecting. What is EMO's plan for full-disinfecting/cleaning days?

A. EMO will be cleaning and sanitizing daily. Daily cleaning is recommended, once a week is not enough.

Screening -

Q. How are you going to ensure that teachers will be following the same social distancing requirements outside of the school day(ex: travel, large gatherings, etc)

A. All staff will attest daily that they have met the return to work protocols presented by the Department of Health and are exhibiting no known symptoms of COVID-19

Q. How will you ensure that students are not sick?

A. This will be a two part process. Parents will be sure that their child has no symptoms before sending them to school. Upon arrival, staff will be taking the temperature of all children as they enter the building.

Q. Will visitors be allowed?

A. There will be no visitors allowed.

Q. What happens if someone gets the virus?

A. To preserve HIPAA and FERPA rights, the situation will be handled similar to a case of Lice - Contact will be made to each household and no names or identifying particulars will be used. Return to school protocol will be guided by the Department of Health and the guidelines that they publish.

Q. What happens if/when a student or teacher gets COVID?

A. Procedures outlined by the Department of Health will be followed. It is completely up to the DOH to provide guidance for a COVID-19 patient and contacts they have been traced to.

Q. What if someone goes into school with no symptoms, yet then tests positive... what happens? Does the whole cohort have to quarantine?

A. No. Masks plus social distancing will allow us to avoid the quarantine of an entire class/cohort. The Department of Health will guide us through this process.

Q. Where are the covid tests being conducted for the staff?

A. Staff are not being tested for COVID-19 as a condition to work.

Q. What temperature threshold for fevers will the school be using?

A. 100.4 is the guidance provided by the CDC and DOH.

Transportation -

Q. If enough parents don't opt out how will you handle transportation?

A. We will provide bussing to all that need it. We are using the parent opt out numbers to determine the amount of buses and to develop bus routes.

Q. Will busses be cleaned and sanitized?

- A. Please see the video from Montauk Bus that deals with the cleaning methods.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IX4J2VqR8q8VIkfDo6iEx985IZPcxwXf/view>

Lunch/Recess -

- Q. What would lunch and recess look like for the children?
- A. At the elementary level, lunch will be eaten in the Cafetorium. In the Middle School lunch will be consumed in the classroom. Recess will proceed as it has in the past, but with organized, often cohorted, activities that promote social distancing and avoid touching/sharing of objects.
- Q. Will I be able to bring lunch in for my child and their friends?
- A. No

Arrival and Dismissal -

- Q. Will arrival and dismissal time be different?
- A. Parent arrival and departure times will be adjusted slightly to avoid crowds in the halls and intermingling of students that are arriving or departing on buses. The actual times will be shared as we get closer to the start of school.
- Q. Can siblings sit together?
- A. Yes. That will be an expectation if they attend the same school.
- Q. We need a better idea of what drop off and pick up looks like before we can answer the survey. If I need to park and wait in line I don't feel like it is safe.
- A. A student in a car, with a family member, is the safest and most socially distant place to be. However, we anticipate a smooth, drop off process that allows parents to unload 3-4 cars at a time in front of the building prior to the busses arriving. For dismissal, walkers and parent pick would occur prior to bus arrival. Specifics will be released as we get closer to the start of school.